

Confederate President Jefferson Davis refused to consider Cleburne's proposal and forbade discussion of the idea. The concept, however, did not die. By the fall of 1864, the South was losing more and more ground, and some believed the only way to avoid defeat was to arm the slaves. On March 13, the Confederate Congress passed General Order 14, and President Davis signed the order into law. The order was issued March 23, 1865, but only a few companies were raised and the war ended before they could be used in battle.

In actual numbers, African-American soldiers made up an estimated 9–10% of the Union Army. Losses among African Americans were high, and from all reported casualties, approximately one fifth of all African Americans enrolled in the military lost their lives during the Civil War. Black soldiers did not have a high desertion rate despite the discrimination in pay and duty, the threat of death or return to slavery if captured, and the ravages of battle.

African-American soldiers overcame the tremendous odds against them and made an important and valuable contribution to the Civil War. They fought for their freedom with courage and bravery. A government commission which investigated the condition of the freedman, in May 1864, summed up the impact African Americans had on the Civil War. "The whites have changed, and are still rapidly changing, their opinion of the Negro. And the Negro, in his new condition as a freedman, is himself, to some extent, a changed being. No one circumstance has tended so much to these results as the display of manhood in Negro soldiers. Though there are higher qualities than strength and physical courage, in our present state of civilization there are no qualities which command from the masses more respect."

Connie Slaughter is a historian at Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, Missouri.

John Peterson and Ida Jones

Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Project

The Civil War Soldiers and Sailors (CWSS) project is a cooperative effort by the National Park Service and several other public and private organizations to computerize information about the Civil War. The goal of the CWSS is to increase the American people's understanding of this decisive era in American history by making information about it widely accessible. The CWSS will enable members of the public to make a personal link between themselves and history, fostering an appreciation of history that is crucial to gaining support for preserving historic sites. The CWSS will also further the development of innovative educational and research tools.

The National Park Service's Information and Telecommunications Center (ITC) is managing the overall CWSS project, working with a number of cooperating organizations. Two activities which are part of the CWSS project which relate to African-American history are described below.

U.S. Colored Troops Data Entry

One of the first uses of the CWSS data will be for the African-American Civil War Memorial in the Shaw neighborhood in the District of Columbia. The memorial is scheduled to be dedi-

cated by President Clinton in 1996 and will be managed by NPS. The approximately 185,000 names of soldiers who served in the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) have been given first priority for data entry in the CWSS Names Index project, managed by the Federation of Genealogical Societies. Nationwide there are 27 states and the District of Columbia working on data entry. Information on the status of the CWSS and how to volunteer can be found on the CWSS homepage, the url is <http://www.cr.nps.gov/itd/welcome.html>. A group in Washington, DC, organized by Lyndia Grant in Council member Frank Smith's office, has sent in a large number of names. The Genealogical Society of Utah (Mormon Church) is editing and processing the names in partnership with NPS.

Howard University Research on African American Civil War Sailors

As part of the CWSS Project, the NPS has established a cooperative agreement with Howard University. Under this agreement, the History Department at Howard is conducting research to identify African-American sailors who served during the Civil War. Funding is provided by Department of Defense Legacy funds. Identification of African-American sailors requires

specialized research since, unlike the Civil War-era Army records, the Navy service records were not separated by race. Howard's research team, headed by Dr. Joseph Reidy, has examined numerous Civil War-era Navy muster rolls. Information on thousands of men has been entered into a research database. Following up on clues in the muster rolls, researchers have also begun looking at selected pension records. The project's work with primary sources means that not only is the project identifying sailors names, but it is also compiling new and important information about

the role of African-American sailors in the Civil War-era Navy. The three-year project is a cooperative effort of Howard University, the National Park Service, and the Naval Historical Center.

For more information about the CWSS, contact the NPS Project Manager, John Peterson, at 202-343-4415, or Ida Jones at 202-343-4447.

John Peterson is Project Manager of the CWSS.

Ida Jones is a public historian working on the CWSS project.

John H. Dryfhout

The Search for African-American Descendants of the Massachusetts 54th Regiment

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is actively trying to locate African-American descendants of the famed Massachusetts 54th Regiment whose courageous story was told in the movie, *Glory*. This regiment was also the subject of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens' masterpiece, the *Shaw Memorial*, which stands in Boston Common.

The final version of the heroic-sized Shaw Memorial, one of the greatest works of American sculpture ever produced, is exhibited at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire. This particular cast, completed in 1901 for the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, represents Saint-Gaudens' final rendition of the earlier (1897) bronze in Boston Common. The relief in Cornish is made of plaster, and was never cast in bronze. Temperature and humidity have caused serious deterioration in the plaster and in order to preserve the monument for the future, the National Park Service and the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, a partnership organization, are raising \$450,000 to cast the relief in bronze.

The project is planned for completion in 1997, the hundredth anniversary celebration of the Shaw Memorial unveiling. The full scale plaster relief will be made available on a long-term loan by the National Park Service to a major museum in the United States.

Donations toward the \$450,000 project are being accepted by the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, c/o the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, RR 3, Box 73, Cornish, NH 03745.

In conjunction with the casting project, the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, and the Boston African-American National Historic Site are seeking descendants of the men who served in the 54th Regiment. At the same time, information is also being sought on the African-American men who Saint-Gaudens hired during the 1880s and 1890s as models for the sculpture. Historic photographs of the unveiling and dedication of the Shaw Memorial showing the 54th veterans in their uniforms are also needed.

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site consists of the home, studios, gardens, and collections of the sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907). One of only two National Park Service units dedicated to a visual artist, the 150-acre site is open daily from late May through late October.

For more information on the project, contact Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, telephone 603-675-2175, Fax 603-675-2701, e-mail SAGA@VALLEY.NET.

John Dryfhout is Superintendent of Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

*Shaw Memorial,
Boston, MA.*

